

Present: Laila Barr; Kathy Dunn; Dave Elliott, vice-chair; Chris Fankhauser, (provisional); Kumiko Huff; Carl Johnson (provisional); Jane Kuechle, chair; Miranda Leidich; Ed Miller; Michael O'Neal (provisional); Tina Shereen; Roger Thordarson

Excused: Dan Chavre; Carla Saulter

Staff: Barbara de Michele, Community Relations liaison; Beth Somerfield, Metro webmaster; Bob Virkelyst, Marketing and Customer Service Supervisor; Sarah Driggs, King County DOT Communications Senior Editor; Sharron Shinbo, Marketing and Customer Service Project Manager; Christine Anderson, Special Project Manager; Darwin Campbell, Sales and Customer Service Manager

Guests: Carol Finn (provisional member, pending Councilmember approval); Brian Ferry, One Bus Away

Kuechle called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.,

Webmaster and Snowfall Emergency Brochure

Kuechle introduced Beth Somerfield, newly appointed Metro webmaster. Beth is filling a new position created in response to customer suggestions and TAC recommendations for improvements to the Metro website. Somerfield provided a brief overview of her professional qualifications. TAC members introduced themselves and provided several statements of support.

Somerfield, Driggs and Virkelyst then introduced a new brochure and draft web page being developed for possible snowfall emergencies this year. They asked TAC members to critique the two documents and received numerous suggestions for changes. In general, the group felt that the brochure provided "too much information." However, said Miller, "the brochure is an excellent beginning, and we appreciate the direction that Metro is taking on this." The webpage for emergency information is evolving, but the group expressed support for the overall direction of the project. Barr and Elliott raised questions about Metro working with TV and radio stations to distribute emergency route information. Virkelyst said that new communications equipment between individual buses and Metro will be installed and operational in 2010, at which time Metro can begin to develop those kinds of capabilities. In the interim, Metro is working on providing text messaging for individual route information. Miller asked when the emergency information would be available, and Virkelyst responded that staff is working to meet a November 9th deadline.

Note: Provisional membership is provided to Transit Advisory Committee nominees whose applications have been approved by Metro staff, approved by their respective Councilmembers, and submitted to the Executive. Provisional members are allowed to deliberate with other TAC members, but may not participate in votes or be elected to committee leadership posts.

Bus Wrap Advertising

Shinbo presented the group with a proposal that staff will take to the Council during the budget process. The proposal would allow Metro buses to be wrapped on the street side of the bus, covering 25% of the windows. In other markets, Titan Advertising has found that this type of wrapped bus meets community concerns and is also acceptable to advertisers. If adopted, the wrapped buses are projected to bring in an estimated \$160,000 in additional revenue the first year, and would allow Metro to test the concept with advertisers and riders. Shinbo provided several visuals of the new approach. Tina Shereen moved/Kathy Dunn seconded that the TAC supports Metro's proposal and authorizes Jane Kuechle and Dave Elliott to provide testimony to that effect on the TAC's behalf as appropriate. The motion passed unanimously. Several members expressed individual support for fully wrapped buses.

Report on TAC-ASAC Merger

Barr and Shereen reported on their participation on September 10 in a discussion with members of the Accessible Services Advisory Committee (see notes, attached) regarding a possible merger of the two groups. The purpose of the initial meeting was to flesh out all of the concerns and issues around the proposal. Possible solutions will be developed at subsequent meetings.

De Michele reported that, subsequent to the September 10 meeting, her supervisor Betty Gullledge-Bennett had briefed General Manager Kevin Desmond and other Metro administrators, as well as Council Transportation and Regional Transit Committee staff, on the proposed merger. In addition, Bria Schlottman, former TAC member, has offered to conduct a work session on the merger as part of her classwork for the Bainbridge Institute.

Ed Miller moved/Dave Elliott seconded that the TAC continue to pursue a possible merger, with a goal of presenting a concrete proposal at the January retreat, and that we "take Bria up on her offer." Passed unanimously. Miller, Shereen, Dunn and Barr volunteered to participate in the next meeting.

Committee Business

- TAC unanimously established January 23 as the date of their annual retreat. Elliott requested that de Michele provide the group with a list of 2008 and 2009 accomplishments prior to the retreat.

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Kuechle at 8:00 p.m.

TAC/ASAC Merger Exploration
Joint Meeting Notes
September 10, 2009

Kay Burrows and Jerome Pipitone, representing the Accessible Services Advisory Committee, met with Tina Shereen and Laila Barr, representing the Transit Advisory Committee, to explore issues to be addressed with regard to a possible merger of the two groups. Staff attending the meeting included Barbara de Michele (TAC), Pat Cleary (ASAC) and Sarah Luthens (ASAC). De Michele explained that the purpose of the meeting was to flesh out all the important issues; solutions will be devised through the process of developing a plan.

Possible positive outcomes for the merger:

- Saving money (fewer meetings, less staff)
- Will give ASAC higher visibility to “get things done”
- Shared issues and concerns – issues overlap in many cases
- More credibility for both groups
- Broader, stronger membership
- Reduce duplication in budget, vehicles, facilities, and discussion time
- Broader understanding of issues effecting people with disabilities, seniors
- Integration of all riders
- TAC gains better understanding of issues of concern to people with disabilities and seniors
- ASAC concerns get more visibility

Possible negative outcomes for the merger

- ASAC concerns might be diluted (Note: this was the overwhelming concern of both the TAC members and ASAC members when first surveyed, and the top concern voiced by others included in the discussion).
- ASAC influence may erode over time.
- ASAC will lose its unique voice
- Adding time for additional issues and staff.
- Meeting around rush hour is problematic for ACCESS vans being on time
- ASAC – disabilities lead to more absences, could impact attendance policies
- There could be a lack of sensitivity to ASAC issues; how those impact lives
- It will take time to ensure that everyone is culturally competent
- Increased time commitment might mean turnover of members who “signed up for a different program”
- Would ASAC topics be relegated to sub-committee only? How to handle the work without increasing the time commitment to unrealistic levels.

What will it take to make the merger happen?

- Merging ASAC and TAC would require council action
- We need an actual plan for people to “push against”

Are there other ways to meet our goals?

- Joint meetings without council action – on a quarterly basis or “as needed”
- Member representatives attend each others’ meetings
- We could have a “demo project” working together on selected issues
- Fine line between over-writing and under-writing a new ordinance – keep things flexible within a broad framework. What are the basic parameters that everyone agrees on?

Next Steps/Additional Thoughts

- Proposal to hold a joint retreat in January
- At least half the retreat would be devoted to reviewing a draft plan or proposal that the group can “negotiate”
- Pat will check to see if there are any requirements for ASAC or TAC outside of the ordinances
- Kevin needs to be briefed
- Council staff needs to be briefed
- We can’t forget that Metro sponsors other ad hoc groups to work on service changes, RapidRide alignments and so forth. Where would this new committee fit into the structure?
- Most fixed route issues are shared, but there would be a need to ensure that an ACCESS topic is addressed at least once a year, perhaps with the work being done outside TAC meeting times (with regular updates) and final advisory recommendation adopted by TAC.
- Ad hoc committees could also be used as adjuncts to the work performed by ASAC and TAC – they would be time limited, focused on a single issue (like the website).
- So far, TAC and ASAC have worked on a consensus model. Would that model change?
- Committee makeup – Eighteen divided 9/9 or sixteen divided 9/7?